

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EGEN, UNGA, ECOSOC, AS
SUBJ: UN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (OVERVIEW COMMITTEE)

REF: A) STATE 161676, B) STATE 165282

1. SUMMARY: EMBASSY DISCUSSED ISSUES REFTEL WITH GOA AND PROVIDED APPROPRIATE SUMMARY OF MATERIALS PROVIDED BY AND DREW INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FROM DEPARTMENT'S MESSAGES THIS SUBJECT. THIS MESSAGE PROVIDES A RESPONSE FROM THE GOA PROVIDED IN A LETTER TO THE EMBASSY FROM DOUGLAS STURKEY, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS BRANCH, DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS WHO NOTES THAT THE GOA WOULD BE INTERESTED IN DUE COURSE TO RECEIVETHE USG'S RESPONSE TO ITS LETTER AND THAT IT WOULD WELCOME FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ON THIS SUBJECT IN THE FUTURE. THE GOA INFORMS THE EMBASSY THAT IT HAS PROVIDED COPIES OF OUR INFORMATION AND OF ITS REPLY TO ITS MISSIONS IN NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON. END SUMMARY

2) THE GOA WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS ITS GRATITUDE FOR THE SUMMARY OF JUNE 29 IN WHICH IS DETAILED CURRENT UNITED STATES THINKING ON THE ROLE AND OPERATINS OF THE UN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ON INTERNATINAL ECONOMIC ISSUES. THIS QUESTIN HAS BEEN GIVEN CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION BY
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THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT IN RECENT MONTHS, IN ATTEMPTING TO FIND A ROLE FOR THE COMMITTEE WHICH WOULD ALLOW IT TO CONTRIBUTE IN A PRODUCTIVE AND CONSRUCTIVE MANNER TO THE NORTH/SOUTH DIALOGUE.

3) WE WOULD AGREE WITH THE UNITED STATES VIEW THAT THE COMMITTEE SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF

GLOBAL ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, AND LEAD TO A GREATER CONVERGENCE OF VIEWS ON THESE PROBLEMS. FURTHERMORE WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY TAKEN THE VIEW THAT THE COMMITTEE SHOULD NOT UNDERTAKE NEGOTIATIONS WITH A VIEW TO THE CONCLUSION OF AGREEMENTS ON SPECIFIC MATTERS UNDER NEGOTIATION IN SPECIALIZED FORUMS.

4) HOWEVER WE BELIEVE THAT IF TOO MANY CONSTRAINTS ARE PLACED ON THE ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE, IT WILL SERVE NONE OF ITS FUNCTIONS AS OUTLINED IN RESOLUTION 32/174. IT WILL BE ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE, IF THIS HAPPENS, FOR THERE TO BE HIGH LEVEL REPRESENTATION AT OVERVIEW COMMITTEE MEETINGS - A POINT WHICH WE ALL AGREE IS IMPORTANT IF THE COMMITTEE IS TO ACHIEVE POSITIVE RESULTS.

5) THIS LEADS US TO THE BELIEF THAT THE COMMITTEE SHOULD HAVE SOMETHING OF A "CATALYTIC" ROLE, WHEREBY IT COULD SEARCH FOR POLITICAL BREAKTHROUGHS IN AREAS OF DIFFICULTY IN THE DETAILED NEGOTIATIONS UNDERWAY ELSEWHERE. WE WOULD ENVISAGE THE COMMITTEE ATTEMPTING TO ISOLATE STICKING POINTS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS, AND TO REACH AGREEMENT ON WAYS IN WHICH THESE MIGHT BE RESOLVED; WE WOULD NOT SEE THIS AS AN "INSTRUCTION" ON SPECIFIC MATTERS TO THE RELEVANT FORUMS. IN ESSENCE, WE THINK THAT MORE HAS TO BE ACHIEVED THAN BROAD DISCUSSION ON GENERAL ISSUES, IF THE EXERCISE IS TO BE WORTHWHILE IN FACILITATING A RECONCILIATION OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

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6) THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, THEREFORE, SHOULD BE FLEXIBLE IN THEIR APPROACH TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE, AND NOT REJECT OUT OF HAND THE NOTION THAT THE COMMITTEE COULD BE A FORUM WHERE NEW DEVELOPED COUNTRY COMMITMENTS COULD BE GIVEN ON SOME OUTSTANDING SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES. OBVIOUSLY THIS WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE IN MANY AREAS, AND IN ANY CASE IT WOULD BE UP TO EACH COUNTRY INVOLVED, BUT THE OPTION SHOULD BE LEFT OPEN IN AN EFFORT TO GAIN SOME COMPROMISES FROM THE G77 ON THEIR MORE RADICAL DEMANDS.

7) WITH THE ABOVE POINTS IN MIND, WE WOULD HAVE NO DIFFICULTY WITH THE IDEAS PROPOSED IN YOUR SUMMARY, ON HOW THE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE SHOULD FUNCTION. INDEED IT WOULD APPEAR THAT YOU LOOK TOWARDS SOMETHING OF A "CATALYTIC" ROLE, WHEN YOU MENTION THAT COUNTRIES SHOULD BE PREPARED TO RECONSIDER THEIR POSITION ON PARTICULAR DIFFICULT ISSUES IN THE COURSE OF THE COMMITTEE'S DELIBERATIONS.

8) IN RETURN, HOWEVER, FOR SUCH AN APPROACH BY DEVELOPED COUNTRIES WE WOULD WISH TO SEE SOME MOVEMENT ON THE PART OF THE G77 IN RELATION TO THE "WRAPPING UP" OF THE WORK OF THE

COMMITTEE. WHILE INITIALLY WE FAVORED A CHAIRMAN'S REPORT, THE MAY MEETING REVEALED MR. JAZAIRY'S UNWILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT THIS. NEVERTHELESS CUMBERSOME MANIFESTOS REQUIRING WORD BY WORD NEGOTIATIONS HAVE TO BE AVOIDED. WE ARE THEREFORE IN FULL AGREEMENT WITH YOUR SUMMARY ON THIS ASPECT OF THE COMMITTEE'S FUNCTIONS.

9) WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN DUE COURSE TO RECEIVE YOUR RESPONSE TO THE ABOVE AND WOULD WELCOME FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ON THIS SUBJECT, AT YOUR CONVENIENCE. WE HAVE COPIED THE TEXT OF THIS REPLY TO OUR MISSIONS IN UN NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON FOR THEIR INFORMATION.
ALSTON

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